AMERICAN ROMANTICS II

Premiere Recordings of Turn of the Century Works for String Orchestra

GOWANUS ARTS ENSEMBLE & REUBEN BLUNDELL, CONDUCTOR

These world-premiere recordings are the second in a series promoting music by American composers, from the rich but underrepresented (at least in performance) music of the late 19th and 20th centuries. Some of these composers were born in America. Others, from Denmark, France, Germany, Great Britain, and the Netherlands, joined and influenced the musical life of their adopted country. Beyond these string orchestra works lie tantalizing, and mostly obscured, catalogs of compositions including operas, tone poems, symphonies, chamber music and songs.

STEPHEN FOSTER (1826–1864)
ARR. CARL BUSCH (1862–1943)

❶ *Old Folks at Home* | 5:29

FÉLIX BOROWSKI (1872–1956)

Suite Rococo

❷ *I. Caprice Pompadour* | 2:49
❸ *II. Air à Danser* | *3:03*
❹ *III. Passepied* | *3:14*

Two Pieces

❺ *Crépuscule (Sunset)* | *4:20*
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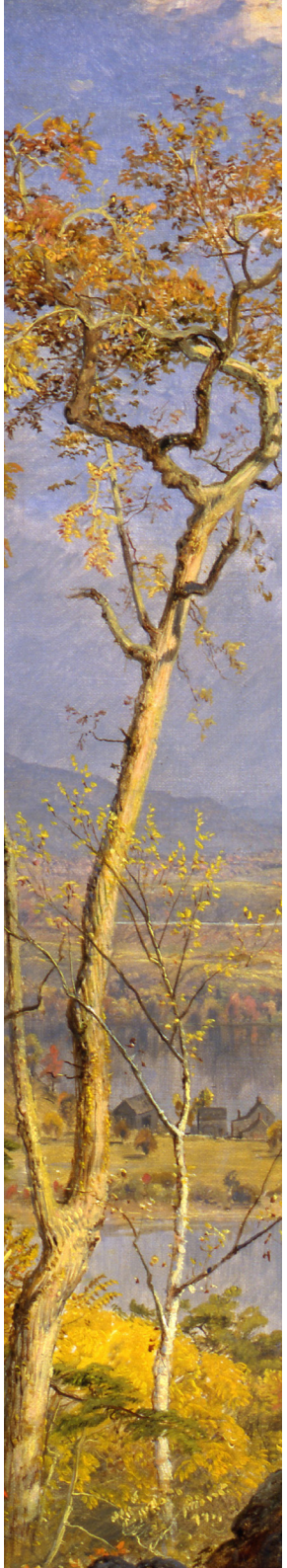
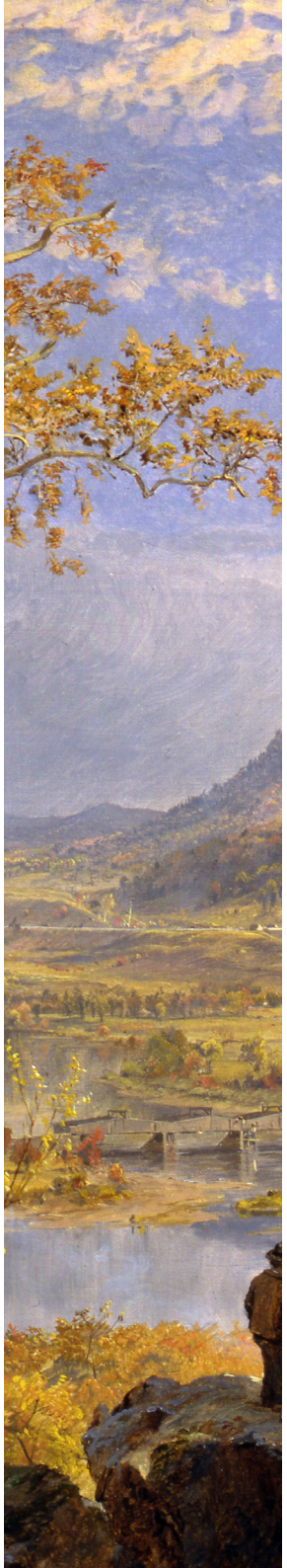
⓲ *My Old Kentucky Home* | 5:12



STEPHEN FOSTER & CARL BUSCH
(1826–1864) **(1862–1943)**

"Two American Folk Songs" by Stephen Foster, reimagined by Carl Busch
Old Folks At Home (Swanee River); My Old Kentucky Home | In Stephen Foster's short life, he fused spirituals, minstrelsy and folk traditions of Irish, Scottish, English and German music into an American song style, earning immense popularity. Shortly after Foster's death, Harper's magazine wrote, "The air is full of his melodies. They are our national music." His most famous melodies include these two (now state songs of Florida and Kentucky), as well as *Oh! Susanna* and *Jeanie with the Light Brown Hair.*

In Kansas City, Danish-born composer, conductor and music professor Carl Busch enthusiastically adopted American themes into his compositions after moving there aged 25. These two pieces were published as settings of "American Folk Songs," but in other works, Busch drew on Native American ideas — whether collected melodies, or in the abstract, such as tone poems inspired by Longfellow's *Song of Hiawatha*.



FÉLIX BOROWSKI
(1872–1956)

Suite Rococo: I. Caprice Pompadour; II.Air à Danser; III. Passepied; Two Pieces: Crépuscule (Sunset); Sérénade | Born in Northern England to a Polish emigre father and musical mother, Borowski studied in London and Cologne, and taught in Aberdeen. Moving to Chicago in 1896, he carried a letter of praise from Edvard Grieg. It helped gain the Chicago Tribune's attention (he would be a music critic for over fifty years), and an appointment to the Chicago Musical College, now part of Roosevelt University. Teaching violin, history and composition, students included Mexican composer Revueltas. After serving as College President, he joined Northwestern University as a Music History professor from 1925. He was music curator of the Chicago's Newberry Library, which holds his papers, and a program annotator for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Works include organ and solo piano pieces, chamber music, three ballets, several tone poems and four symphonies.

The Air à Danser in his Suite Rococo contains an interesting instruction in the trio — "*un peu loure*," an instruction only otherwise found in Delibes' ballet *Coppelia!*

GEORGE WHITEFIELD CHADWICK
(1854–1931)

Intermezzo (originally Andante semplice, from String Quartet No. 4)
Following a short appointment teaching at Olivet College in Michigan, 21-year-old Bostonian Chadwick pursued further musical studies in Germany. After studies in Leipzig, he moved to Munich to study with Josef Rheinberger. On his return to Boston, he joined the New England Conservatory faculty, becoming its Director from 1897. There he directed the orchestra, while producing an impressive body of works – operas, oratorios, symphonies and chamber music. His string quartet (from which he extracted this "*Intermezzo*") was inspired by Dvořák's *American* Quartet, its pentatonic writing meant to evoke Native American melodies or spirituals.

ARTHUR FOOTE
(1853–1937)

Theme & Variations | Aged fourteen, Arthur Foote enrolled in theory class at New England Conservatory (near his home in Salem, MA) entering Harvard three years later. Unlike most of his compatriots, his formal studies were entirely American — his Masters in Music (also from Harvard) was the first graduate music degree conferred in the United States. The following summer (1875) found Foote attending Wagner's first Bayreuth Festival, establishing connections with many of Europe's leading musicians. This was the first of eight European trips he took over twenty years. Foote held church positions, including Boston's First Unitarian Church (1878–1910), and taught composition and organ: he was an American Guild of Organists co-founder. With Walter Spalding, he wrote "Modern Harmony in its Theory and Practice" (1905), and his honors included election to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

This *Theme & Variations* originally formed part of his *Serenade for Strings*, dedicated to Henry Lee Higginson (1834–1919), the businessman-philanthropist founder of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. However, as the largest and most ambitious of the movements, he withdrew it prior to publication – its manuscript is in the New England Conservatory and the Fleisher Collection holds the parts.

PAUL MIERSCH
(1868–1956)

Wiegenlied (Cradle Song) | Born in Dresden, Miersch studied cello with Joseph Werner and composition with Rheinberger in Munich. He then spent three years in Washington D.C., where he performed with his brother, Johannes. Paul returned to Germany to play in the 1891 Bayreuth Festival under Anton Seidl. His brother joined the Boston Symphony Orchestra as a violinist but the two continued to perform together. Settling in New York, Paul played under Seidl again, in the Philharmonic, then as principal cellist of the New York Symphony Orchestra under Walter Damrosch, in the newly-built Carnegie Hall. He had a close musical association with American virtuoso violinist Maude Powell: this *Cradle Song* was scored for violin and piano (dedicated to Powell), and he performed in a quartet with her for several years (with Johannes on viola). From 1899 Miersch was principal cellist in the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, where he was often featured in their "American Nights" — he conducted his *Norse Legend* once, in 1904.

ETHELBERT NEVIN
(1862–1901)

La Guitare (Pierrot et Pierrete), arr. Theodore Miersch | Born near Pittsburgh, to a large family with connections to American literary, journalistic, theological and political history, Nevin was named after his mother's younger brother, Ethelbert Oliphant, killed in the Civil War a few months earlier, in the Army of the Potomac.

Beginning his musical career in Boston, he continued studies in Berlin with Karl Klindworth and Hans von Bülow, though he summered in Pennsylvania. After his second year in Berlin, he returned to Boston and married Anne Paul, a family friend from Pennsylvania. Despite what seems to have been chronic physical illness and occasional depression, he kept busy as organist, teacher, composer, and before long, young father from 1888. The next year, Ethelbert's younger brother, Arthur, came to study at the New England Conservatory — Arthur would have a long career as composer, conductor and historian. Ethelbert's career was growing, too — he toured as a piano recitalist and Wagner lecturer, all the while composing. From 1891, he made several Atlantic crossings with his young family (their daughter was born in Berlin).

With hundreds of songs to his name, Nevin was called an American Schubert. His publisher, Schirmer, had Paul Miersch prepare this inventive string arrangement for publication alongside the

original piano version in 1896. Whereas in traditional *commedia del'arte*, the lovesick Pierrot's romantic foil was Columbine, some 1800s pantomimes featured a new love interest, Pierrete.

When their children's schooling necessitated stability, the Nevins moved to New Haven, where Ethelbert died, age 38, in February 1901. Although his career was brief, the U.S. Postal service honored him on a 1940 Famous Composers ten-cent stamp.

EDGAR STILLMAN KELLEY
(1857–1944)

Confluentia | Kelley was born in Sparta, Wisconsin, though his parents were New Englanders, going back centuries. His father's office was in the library building, and young Edgar became very well-read. He studied piano in Chicago with the composer and organist Clarence Eddy, and Napoleon Ledochowski, Chicago Conservatory of Music director. After studies in Stuttgart, Kelley became music critic for the San Francisco Chronicle and a church organist. This work was first published in 1891 as the second of three piano miniatures — the third is a very animated depiction of the headless horseman from Washington Irving's "Sleepy Hollow." Confluentia was dedicated to local philanthropist John Parrott, whose financial support toward a local orchestra included the 1890s San Francisco Symphonic Society concerts (ahead of the SFS's 1911 founding) and the premiere of Kelley's *Macbeth*. He prefaces it: "Here is the conflux of the Rhine and the Mosel (Moselle River). This led the Romans to call the city 'Confluentia.' These streams which rise in regions so remote — are here united until they pass into the eternal sea beyond." He ascribed this florid writing to a pseudonymous Hans von Brechnowski. (Also "author" for a Lilliputian national anthem in Kelley's later "*Gulliver*," premiered by the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra.)

By the time of this string orchestra version, Kelley and his wife, Jessie Kelley, an accomplished pianist, had spent several years in San Francisco, New York and Berlin, before she joined the faculty of Western College for Women (now part of Miami University), and the

two taught at Ohio institutions (including Cincinnati's Conservatory). The Eastman School of Music's Sibley Library holds a copy of a first edition of his string orchestra version, inscribed "To my esteemed Colleague, Carl Busch, from Edgar Stillman Kelley, year 1912."

MARTINUS VAN GELDER
(1854–1941)

The Lingac Boat Song | In Amsterdam, a fourteen-year-old van Gelder dedicated his *Fantasie concertante* to King William III, who personally accepted the piece. (This is the same King referred to by Queen Victoria as "an uneducated farmer.") Other early works won international prizes and Holland's Cross of the Golden Lion Order. Van Gelder's teachers included Ferdinand Hiller, Mendelssohn's successor as music director in Leipzig (and recently notorious for his souvenir lock of Beethoven's hair).

Moving to New York in 1876, van Gelder's debut violin recital in Steinway Hall was a great success, and he based himself in New York. Moving to teach at the Philadelphia Musical Academy in 1882, he would spend most of the rest of his life living in Central Philadelphia. He continued to perform regularly, while teaching generations of students.

This charming miniature was dedicated to internationally renowned singer Ernestine Schumann-Heink, who lived briefly in Southern New Jersey. Far more ambitious works by van Gelder display 1800s influences including von Weber, Wagner and even Sousa. His *Dramatic Prelude* requires retuned (*scordatura*) string instruments, and his symphonies are interesting, if lengthy. In 1909, as "Erardus Saagra," he published *The Might of Truth*, "a full course for self-instruction in modern theism."

BERNARDUS BOEKELMAN
(1838–1930)

In der Einsamkeit (Solitude) | Boekelman was from a large family in Utrecht, the Netherlands. Beginning piano with his father, he continued studies in Germany, teachers including Ignaz Moscheles and Hans von Bülow. In his mid-twenties, he toured Brazil, Venezuela, and lived for two years in Mexico. From 1866 he spent 17 years in New York City, teaching, playing in the New York Philharmonic, and founding a piano trio. An inquiring musician, he registered an 1880 patent for a music notation system intended (through colors) to aid students in understanding musical construction.

Solitude was likely composed in Connecticut, where he lived with his young family for six years, while music director at Miss Porter's School.

In 1889, he returned to Europe for a year, interviewing teachers across Europe — the 1900 book "The Century Library of Music," includes these interviews.

From 1897, Boekelman was Music Director of Mrs. Dow's School for Girls, in Westchester County. In 1911, Boekelman donated four of his keyboards to the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Musical Instrument collection. He lived to 93.

LOUIS LOMBARD
(1861–1927)

Élégie | Lombard was born in Lyons, France, to a storied family including a former French cardinal and a lieutenant of Italian leader Garibaldi. Aged nine, Lombard entered the Marseilles Conservatory on violin. In New York, he studied law at Columbia, then garnered enormous wealth through Wall Street investments. Between 1889 and 1896, he was founding director of the Utica Conservatory of Music, building a comprehensive musical curriculum "along European models." He was a delegate or supporter of countless international organizations, a Freemason, and Jury member of the 1904 Paris International Automobile Exhibition.

Well after publication of his book "Observations of a Bachelor," in 1899 Lombard married Alice Atwater, widowed mother of four. Alice's congressman father had founded the Missouri Pacific Railroad, and her family had a significant presence in Western Massachusetts. The Lombards bought the Swiss Castle Trevano, an estate including swimming pools, a garden with 400 gas lamps, a concert hall and an opera house. For several months a year, he produced concerts and operas, while Alice brought home antiquities she bought in Egypt. Visitors included Alice's friend Edith Bolling Galt, who would marry Woodrow Wilson in 1915.

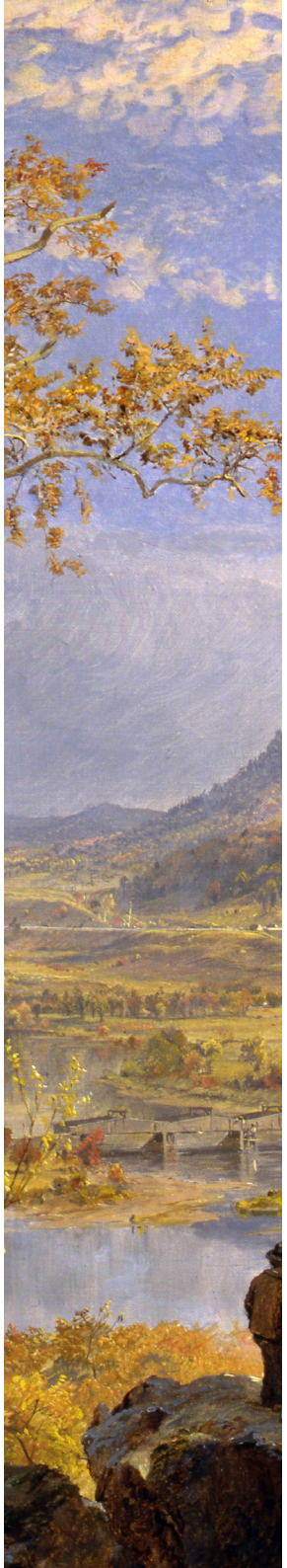
Élégie is dedicated "to my dear friend Leoncavallo," the composer of *I Pagliacci*.

ARTHUR BIRD
(1856–1923)

Gavotte for String Orchestra (From Op. 7)
Valse menuet (Op. 39 No. 2) | Bird was born in Cambridge, MA, and his organ improvisations at church were evidence of early musical skills. Studying at the Berlin Hochschule from 1875, he made Berlin his home. Associated with Liszt, he dedicating the Gavotte to fellow Liszt protégé, pianist and composer Emil Sauer.

Bird wrote a significant number of compositions, including twenty works for symphony orchestra, and an opera commissioned by the Berlin Royal Opera (now Staatsoper Unter den Linden). He conducted the Berlin Philharmonic in a concert entirely of his works.

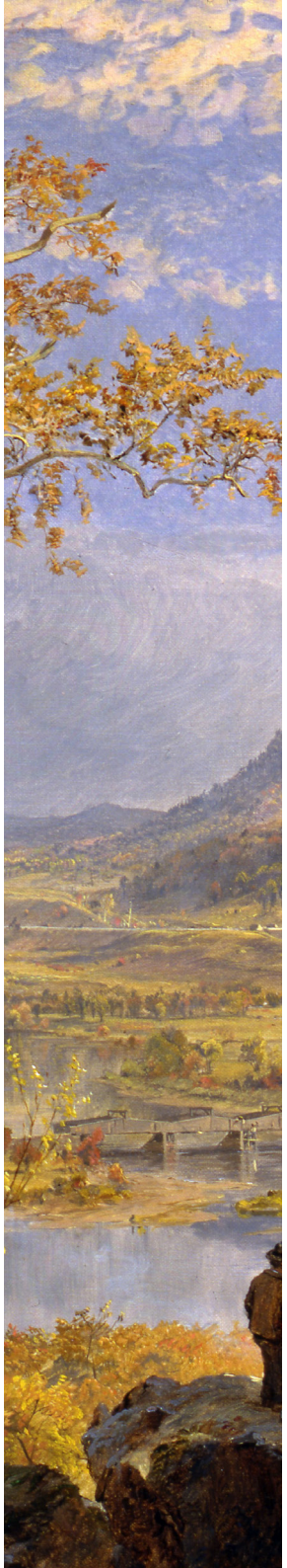
Bird made several United States visits, directing festivals and advocating for music education, and governmental support of music in general.



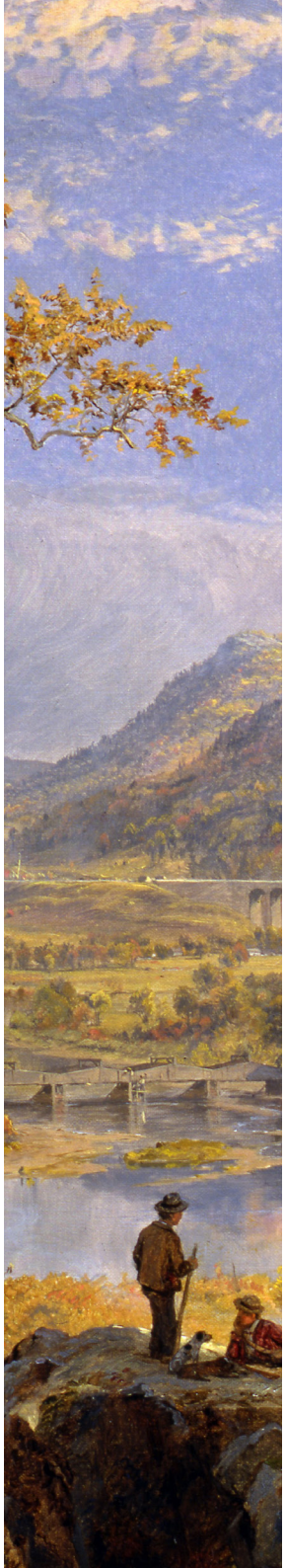
CHARLES WAKEFIELD CADMAN
(1881–1946)

To a Vanishing Race | Born 1881 in Johnstown, PA (near Pittsburgh), Cadman wrote orchestral suites, chamber music, solo piano works, five operas, some film music, and over 250 songs. Spending most of his career in California, he helped found the Hollywood Bowl series, and soloed regularly on piano. In his early twenties, he recorded Native American music 'in the field' using wax cylinders (as Bartók was doing in Hungary).

This piece was first originally one of Cadman's 1908 *Three Moods* for piano. It's prefaced by a quote from a tale by frontier poet Joaquin Miller: a mysterious stranger tells of his youthful love for a young Native American woman who, when her tribe is defeated, tragically kills herself before him. Cadman arranged it for strings in 1913, and it was first performed in Denver by the (New York-based) Russian Symphony Orchestra, led by Modest Altschuler.



These pieces were provided by the Edwin A. Fleisher Collection of Orchestral Music at the Free Library of Philadelphia. The Fleisher Collection is the world's largest lending library of orchestral performance material, lending to performing organizations worldwide. Alongside virtually the entire standard repertoire, it houses many rare and out-of-print works, with a current collection of over 22,000 titles and growing.



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PRODUCER/EDITOR: Dag Gabrielsen

ENGINEER: Peter Karl

POST-PRODUCTION ADVISOR: Dan Lippel

MASTERING: Zach Herchen

EDITOR: Dag Gabrielsen, Zach Herchen

ORCHESTRA MANAGER: Matthew Beaumont

PROGRAM NOTES: Reuben Blundell

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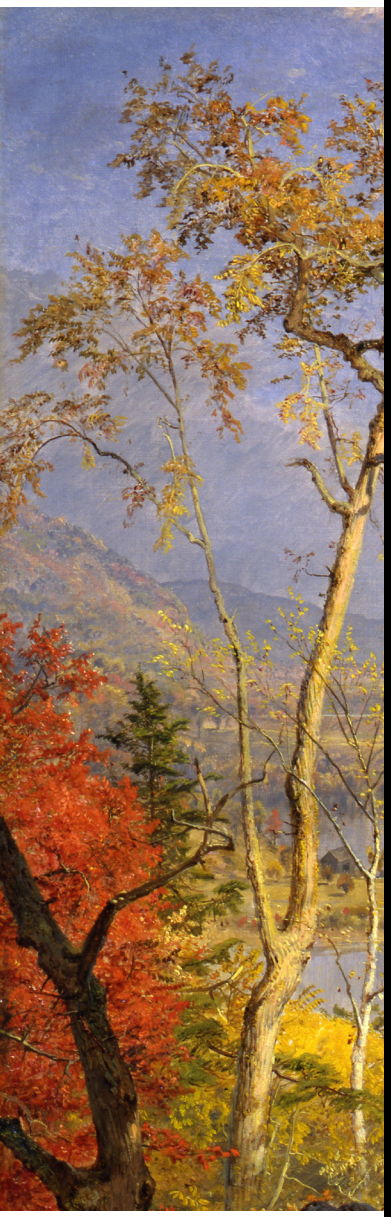
THE GOWANUS ARTS ENSEMBLE

VIOLINS	Orlando Wells Keats Dieffenbach Heather Frank-Olsen Yuiko Kamakari Una Tone
VIOLAS	Margaret Dyer Harris Beth Meyers
CELLI	Julian Schwarz Jeanette Stenson
BASS	Rick Ostrovsky

CONDUCTOR REUBEN BLUNDELL is Music Director of the Lansdowne Symphony in Philadelphia and the Riverside Orchestra in New York. Regularly conducting and playing violin in the Chelsea Symphony, he is in demand as a performer and educator, having taught for the US State Department and nonprofit American Voices in Lebanon and Iraq, and built an orchestra at Hunter College (CUNY). He studied violin in Melbourne, Sydney and through fellowships with the Tanglewood Music Center and New World Symphony. Following summers at the Monteux School, he earned a doctorate in conducting at the Eastman School of Music. Currently, he is a faculty member at New York's Trinity School and the Bloomingdale School of Music.

He lives with his wife, oboist Karen Birch Blundell, daughter Elizabeth, and their cat, Gracy, in Upstate Manhattan.



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